

# News Release

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The Conservation Fund  
1655 N. Fort Myer Drive, Ste. 1300  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Phone: (703) 525-6300  
Fax: (703) 525-4610  
[www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org)

## **Contacts:**

Jena Thompson, The Conservation Fund, (703) 908-5809

***THE CONSERVATION FUND UNVEILS AMERICA'S TOP 10 PLACES WITH  
POTENTIAL TO ADVANCE SMART CONSERVATION  
Communities Recognized for their Proactive Approach to Balancing Land Protection,  
Planning and Development***

**Arlington, VA (May 17, 2006)** The Conservation Fund unveiled today its list of *America's Top 10 Places with Potential to Advance Smart Conservation*, providing national recognition to communities working to integrate land protection, development, infrastructure planning and smart growth. While many of the nation's fastest-growing regions have fallen victim to sprawl and unplanned development, these ten communities across the United States are taking a closer look at how they can prepare for growth and still preserve the qualities that make each region special.

"We have a land-use crisis in the U.S.," said Ed McMahon, member of The Conservation Fund's National Council and Sustainable Development Chair of the Urban Land Institute. "In recent decades, the rate of development in many parts of the nation has been breathtaking. Communities all across America are faced with the same challenge – how to grow without sacrificing the natural, historic and cultural features that improve quality of life for residents, attract visitors and new business and bolster the economy."

A recent USDA Forest Service study concludes that America loses more than 2 million acres of open space to development every year – a rate of 4,000 acres each day. Yet this rapid growth has spurred new conservation action. From the communities that thrive in the coastal redwoods of Northern California to the cities that surround the Delaware Bay, residents, nonprofits, local governments and elected officials have joined forces to identify and develop strategic land conservation and development approaches.

"We're seeing many of these places adopt a 'green infrastructure' approach to conservation," said The Conservation Fund's senior associate for strategic conservation, Mark Benedict. "Instead of pursuing traditional and sometimes haphazard and isolated patterns of conservation, many of these regions are making proactive decisions about which lands to develop and which lands to conserve. It's a tremendous challenge, but the opportunity to advance a strategic approach to conservation in each of these locations is unprecedented."

This green infrastructure approach, defined as strategically planning and managing networks of conservation lands, working landscapes and other open spaces, conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, supports native plants and wildlife, sustains clean air and water and contributes to the health and quality of life for America's communities and people.

While there is no single blueprint for green infrastructure planning, each of the locations included in The Conservation Fund's list of *America's Top 10 Places with Potential to Advance Smart Conservation* shares an approach that applies the strategies and principles profiled in the Fund's recent publication, *Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscapes and Communities*.

The Conservation Fund's list of *America's Top 10 Places with Potential to Advance Smart Conservation* in 2006 includes:

- Coastal Forestlands in Northern CA
- Delaware Bay
- East Texas
- Kansas City Metro Area
- Milwaukee Metro Area
- New River Valley, VA
- North-Central Florida
- Portland Metro Area
- Tucson / Pima County, AZ
- Washington, D.C. Metro Area

"The Conservation Fund applauds the work of its partners across America for their efforts to advance smart conservation, creating livable communities and networks of natural areas, working landscapes and open space. This balanced and strategic approach to conservation serves as a model for the nation," said Benedict.

The Conservation Fund is the nation's foremost environmental nonprofit dedicated to protecting America's land and water legacy for current and future generations. Seeking innovative conservation solutions for the 21st century, the Fund works to integrate economic and environmental goals. Since its founding in 1985, the Fund has helped its partners safeguard wildlife habitat, working landscapes, community "greenspace" and historic sites totaling more than 5 million acres nationwide. With 1 percent fundraising costs and 96 percent program allocation, The Conservation Fund is recognized as the nation's top-rated environmental nonprofit by both the American Institute of Philanthropy and Charity Navigator.

For more information about The Conservation Fund, or to order a copy of *Green Infrastructure: Linking Landscapes and Communities*, by Mark Benedict and Edward McMahon, visit [www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org).

In addition to its recent publication, The Conservation Fund offers training courses on green infrastructure. To register for the upcoming June 12-16, 2006 course in Shepherdstown, WV, visit our Conservation Leadership Network training website at: <http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=2487&back=true>.

## America's Top 10 Places with Potential to Advance Smart Conservation



The Conservation Fund

*America's Partner in Conservation*

## THE CONSERVATION FUND

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## GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*Northern California's Coastal Forestland*

"The Conservation Fund applauds the work of its partners across America for their efforts to advance smart conservation, creating livable communities and networks of natural areas, working landscapes and open space. This balanced and strategic approach to conservation serves as a model for the nation"

- Mark Benedict, author,  
*Green Infrastructure:  
Linking Landscapes and  
Communities*

**CONTACTS:****Chris Kelly****The Conservation Fund****Phone: 415.927.2123****ckelly@infoasis.com****Greg Giusti****University of California****Cooperative Extension****Phone: 707.463.4495****gagiusti@ucdavis.edu****Art Harwood****Harwood Forest Products****Phone: 707.984.6181****art@harwoodp.com****CHALLENGES**

The coastal forestland of Northern California, an ecosystem rich in rare plant and animal species, faces the threat of land fragmentation and conversion as timber companies sell their vast holdings. Rural development and agricultural intensification, especially conversion to vineyards, contribute to this problem.

**APPROACH**

- Identify conservation priorities along the North Coast, especially to link and buffer larger conservation areas and working lands
- Protect large tracts of forestland using sustainable forest management practices
- Manage timber to restore volumes, produce a sustainable flow of high-quality forest products and enhance and restore aquatic and terrestrial resources
- Reduce harvest levels and widen stream buffers and reserve areas to significantly enhance water quality by reducing non-point-source pollution and water temperatures
- Gain public support for sustainable forestry
- Conserve and protect wildlife and associated habitat



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## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- More than 45,000 acres protected already
  - 23,000-acre inholding within Mendocino National Forest (protected by The Conservation Fund and USDA Forest Service)
  - 24,000-acre Garcia River Forest (protected by The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, and State of California's California Coastal Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Board)
    - Largest nonprofit-owned and -operated working forest in California
    - Integrated resource management plan in progress
  - An additional 18,000 acres along Big River and Salmon Creek in negotiation
- The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy published "Conservation Prospects for the North Coast – A Review and Analysis of Existing Conservation Plans, Land Use Trends and Strategies for Conservation on the North Coast of California"
- Mendocino County communities have participated in various forest conservation working groups, including one that developed draft legislation to establish a working forest conservation program within the Wildlife Conservation Board. This legislation is intended to be a companion bill to a proposed 2006 bond measure.

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- Mixed redwood/Douglas fir forests
- Anadromous fish-bearing streams for coho salmon and steelhead trout
- Oak woodland and grassland
- Non-riverine wetland
- Northern spotted owl
- Red tree vole
- California red-legged frog

## PARTNERS

- The Bella Vista Foundation
- The Bright Horizons Foundation
- The California Coastal Conservancy
- The California Department of Fish and Game
- The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
- The Conservation Fund
- The Dean Witter Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- The Redwood Forest Foundation
- The Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund
- The Stephen D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
- USDA Forest Service
- The University of California Cooperative Extension
- The Wildlife Conservation Board



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## GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*Delaware Bay Region (Delaware, Southern New Jersey,  
Southeastern Pennsylvania)*

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Communities*

**CONTACT:****Blaine Phillips****The Conservation Fund****Phone: 302.656.1103****bphillips@conservationfund.org****CHALLENGES**

Haphazard and inappropriate growth, soaring real estate prices and the loss of rural land to development are the top land-use challenges facing the Delaware Bay Region. The watershed is one of the most densely populated regions in the country, and population numbers continue to rise. New Jersey is expected to be the first fully built-out state, nearly half of all recent residential development in Delaware occurred outside designated growth areas, and southeastern Pennsylvania is losing precious farmland at alarming rates.

**APPROACH**

The Conservation Fund has targeted the Delaware Bay region for increased land protection and land planning efforts including:

- Applying the concepts and principles of green infrastructure to advance strategic land conservation and land-use planning
- Assisting local and county planners with strategic development tools
- Supporting working landscape economies
- Protecting coastal resources including forested wetlands and shorelines
- Protecting key tributaries and their headwaters



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## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since establishing the Delaware Bay Initiative in 2003, The Conservation Fund has:

- Completed a rapid GIS assessment of the entire watershed, identifying gaps in protected wildlife habitat and designating three focus areas in each of the watershed states for future land protection efforts
- Protected over 3,000 acres of crucial wildlife habitat across the watershed
- Published *Better Models for Development in Delaware*
- Published *Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania*
- Completed a rapid assessment of green infrastructure assets in Kent County, DE
- Developed suitability models and parcel rankings for working farms, working forests and natural resources in Kent County, DE

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- Coastal wetlands, shorelines and other natural resource areas
- Metropolitan green spaces
- Key tributaries to the Delaware Bay, including the Schuylkill River, the Appoquinimink River, the Leipsic River, the Maurice River and the Cohansey River
- Migratory shore birds, especially the red knot
- Horseshoe crab and other coastal species

## PARTNERS

- Allerton Foundation
- Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge
- Brandywine Conservancy
- Cape May National Wildlife Refuge
- The Conservation Fund
- Delaware Estuary Program
- Delaware Greenways
- Delaware Nature Society
- Delaware Wild Lands
- The DuPont Company
- Fair Play Foundation
- Good Samaritan Foundation
- Keith Campbell Foundation
- Kent County Conservancy
- Livable Delaware Initiative
- Longwood Foundation
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Natural Lands Trust
- The Nature Conservancy
- Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge
- State of Delaware
- Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

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## GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*East Texas*

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**CONTACTS:****Andy Jones****The Conservation Fund****Phone: 512.477.1712****tcftexas@aol.com****www.conservationfund.org****Ted Eubanks****Fermata, Inc.****Phone: 512.472.0052****eubanks@fermatainc.com****www.fermatainc.com****CHALLENGES**

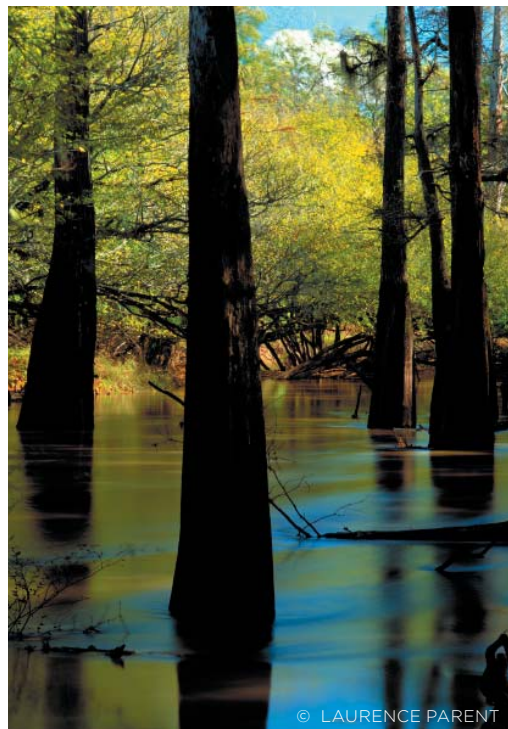
For nearly a century, the Pineywoods communities of East Texas relied on the timber industry as a significant employer and a contributor to the local economy. In recent years, nearly three million acres of private forestland have been sold in east Texas, spurring the region to redefine itself amidst a landscape threatened with fragmentation.

Adjacent to two of the nation's fastest-growing population centers, Dallas and Houston, the river corridors and forests of the Pineywoods are vulnerable to inappropriate development and sprawl.

**APPROACH**

The goal of the Pineywoods Experience Initiative is to maintain the natural and cultural resources that have long defined the region, as well as to build a profitable and sustainable new regional economy. The Conservation Fund and Fermata, Inc. are working with a regional task force to continue a strategic and deliberate approach to land conservation in this area—linking vital tracts of forest and parkland for people and wildlife. The partnership's model will demonstrate how culture, history and nature can be economic drivers in a changing economy.

The partners plan to inventory the Pineywoods' natural resources, cultural heritage, historic sites and goods and services in order to educate local people about the diversity of resources in their own backyards. The partners will suggest sustainable ways to capitalize on these resources and ways to market the experience to city dwellers a short drive away, offering natural, cultural and historic destinations they hope will drive tourism and bolster local economies.



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## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Launched \$35 million initiative to revitalize and protect at least 30,000 acres, as well as the economy and environment of the Pineywoods region of East Texas
- Convened a task force at Stephen F. Austin University
  - Comprised of a range of East Texas business and conservation leaders, scientists and historians, elected officials, government agencies, public land managers and landowners
  - To help spur land protection and sustainable economic development opportunities
- Nearly 50,000 acres in East Texas protected to date

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- Land and ecological resources of the Pineywoods, including:
  - Neches, Sabine and Trinity River corridors
  - Big Thicket National Preserve and Angelina, Davy Crocket and Sabine National Forests
- Habitat for bald eagle, Louisiana black bear, Louisiana pine snake, mallard, paddlefish, swallow-tailed kite, wood duck, wood stork
- Industrial and private timber lands that, with conservation easements, could connect, buffer and enhance key state and federal holdings in the region
- Regional culture and heritage
- Outdoor recreation areas

## PARTNERS

- Angelina College, Lufkin
- Austin College, Sherman
- Big Thicket Association
- Big Thicket Natural Heritage Trust
- Brown Foundation
- Cities of Beaumont, Lufkin, Kountz, Jacksonville, Nacogdoches, Palestine and Sour Lake
- The Conservation Fund
- Eastfield College, Mesquite
- Entergy Foundation
- Fermata, Inc.
- Houston Endowment
- Houston Wilderness
- Humanities, Texas
- Lamar University, Beaumont
- Meadows Foundation
- National Park Service
- Natural Area Protection Association
- The Nature Conservancy of Texas
- Neches River Protection Initiative
- Pineywoods Economic Partnership
- Pineywoods Experience Task Force
- Rice University, Houston
- Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches
- Temple-Inland Foundation
- Texas Committee on Natural Resources
- Texas Forest Service
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- TLL Temple Foundation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA Forest Service

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## GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*North-Central Florida*

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**CONTACTS:**

**Elizabeth Dowdle**  
The Conservation Fund  
Phone: 561.832.7665  
bethdowdle@aol.com

**Ramesh Buch**  
Alachua County Forever Land  
Conservation Program  
Phone: 352.264.6800  
rpbuch@alachua.fl.us

**Tom Hctor**  
University of Florida  
Phone: 352.392.5037  
tomh@geoplan.ufl.edu

**CHALLENGES**

Population growth, soaring land prices and the loss of rural land to development have placed North-Central Florida's great green heartland at a conservation crossroads. The fragmentation of ecologically connected lands, the proliferation of invasive species and off-site land uses that degrade water quality and diminish water quantity also threaten this region.

**APPROACH**

State, regional and local conservation programs have identified a connected North-Central Florida ecological system linking existing conservation lands and strategic unprotected open spaces. Once identified, lands are incorporated into state, regional and local projects that are then reviewed, prioritized and funded through existing land conservation programs, such as Alachua County Forever, Florida Forever and the Florida Communities Trust, which provides money directly to local governments.



## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Alachua County Forever, a land conservation program that has provided \$29 million in funding since it was passed by county voters in 2000
- “Emerald Necklace,” an Alachua County land conservation initiative establishing a network of greenways, open spaces and historic sites surrounding Gainesville
- Florida Forever land conservation projects including Lochloosa Wildlife, Watermelon Pond, Lake Santa Fe, Mill Creek, Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway, Northeast Florida Timberlands and Watershed and Camp Blanding-Osceola Greenway
- Florida Ecological Greenways Network:
  - Identified best opportunities to protect large, connected landscapes
  - Identified ten Critical Linkages statewide; three are within this region
- “O to O:” a cross-region land conservation project linking the Ocala National Forest to Osceola National Forest and the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
  - Includes two Critical Linkages
  - Potentially two million acres and 200+ miles long
  - Likely the largest and longest proposed network of protected conservation lands in the eastern United States

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- The aquatic preserves and other natural communities of the Big Bend Coast
- Natural communities in Alachua County including pinelands, hardwood hammocks and prairies and marshes providing critical habitat for sandhill cranes, the southern bald eagle, Florida black bear, gopher tortoises and endangered whooping cranes
- Other North-Central Florida natural communities, including rare longleaf pine forests and Florida scrub, hardwood hammocks, bald cypress and hardwood swamps
- Watersheds of the St. Johns River, Suwannee River, Ocklawaha River, Santa Fe River, New River and Waccasassa River, including the headwater wetlands and tributaries of these river systems, such as Black Creek and New River

## PARTNERS

- Alachua Conservation Trust
- Alachua County Land Acquisition Program
- The Conservation Fund
- Conservation Trust for Florida
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways and Trails
- Florida Forever:
  - Conservation and Recreation Lands Program
  - Florida Communities Trust
  - Save Our Rivers:
    - St. John River Water Management District
    - Suwannee River Water Management District
- Kanapaha Prairie Homeowners
- USDA Wetland Reserve Program
- University of Florida

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#### CONTACTS:

**Tom Jacobs**

**Marlene Nagel**

**Mid-America Regional Council**

**Phone: 816.474.4240**

**Email: [Tjacobs@marc.org](mailto:Tjacobs@marc.org)**

**[Mnagel@marc.org](mailto:Mnagel@marc.org)**

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# GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*Kansas City Metropolitan Region (Kansas and Missouri)*

### CHALLENGES

If recent growth trends continue in the Kansas City Metropolitan Region, the area will lose approximately 400 square miles of water and upland resources, including woodlands, grasslands and steep slopes, to development as the population increases by an estimated 350,000 people over the next 25 years. In addition, the region struggles with numerous impaired waterways, as well as federal air quality requirements related to ground-level ozone pollution.

### APPROACH

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) has completed a regional natural resources inventory to ensure a scientific basis for green infrastructure planning. MARC's regional, complementary approach emphasizes engaging and educating both citizens and policymakers, as well as creating strategic development policies to encourage sustainable growth and link vital tracts of forest, waterways and parkland for people and wildlife.

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Natural resources inventory
- MetroGreen, a plan for greenways
- Professional educational events series
- 12+ demonstration projects
- Green infrastructure plan to be completed in early 2007
  - Will include map of green infrastructure priorities, regional policy framework and business/strategy plan for the future



© MARC

## RELATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- MARC's Creating Quality Places, a smart growth initiative with vast public and civic support
  - Developed plans for air quality, transit, affordable housing and redevelopment in first-ring suburbs
- Regionally consistent engineering and planning standards for storm water management and sediment/erosion control
- Water and air quality education programs for elected officials, city managers, planners, commissioners, engineers, architects and private citizens
- Stream setback ordinances in five jurisdictions, protecting streams in over 100 square miles of undeveloped land
- Interagency collaboration to protect key watersheds such as the Brush Creek and Blue River basins

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- In its inventory of natural resources, MARC detailed 800 square miles of land that provide substantial conservation or restoration opportunities, including:
  - Forests, glades, prairies and savannas
  - Streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands
- Landscape level connectivity efforts will focus on:
  - Key riparian corridors, including the Kansas and Missouri Rivers as they flow through the metro region
  - Strategic high-value upland resources

## PARTNERS

- City and county governments within the bi-state region
- The Conservation Fund
- Federal agencies: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Agriculture National Agroforestry Center, Geological Survey, Univ. of Missouri Center for Agroforestry, Univ. of Missouri - Kansas City, US Army Corps of Engineers
- Funding: EPA, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Missouri Department of Natural Resources
- Mid-America Regional Council
- Not-for-profit partners: Audubon Missouri, Blue River Watershed Association, Bridging the Gap, Kansas City Wildlands, National Association of Regional Councils, Trust for Public Land
- State agencies: GIS consortiums, Kansas Biological Survey, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources



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## GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*Milwaukee Metropolitan Region*

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**CONTACTS:**

**David Grusznski**  
**The Conservation Fund**  
**Phone: 414.225.2125**  
[dgrusznski@conservationfund.org](mailto:dgrusznski@conservationfund.org)

**Kevin L. Shafer, P.E.**  
**Milwaukee Metropolitan**  
**Sewerage District**  
**Phone: 414.272.5100**  
[kshafer@mmsd.com](mailto:kshafer@mmsd.com)

**CHALLENGES**

A catastrophic 100-year flood hit Milwaukee a mere one year after a similarly devastating flood in 1997. The extensive damage impacted more than a million citizens and destroyed commercial buildings, private residences and public facilities alike. Because the Milwaukee Metropolitan Region's 420 square miles have no zoning to prevent development on hydric ("spongy") soils, future flooding and stormwater runoff continue to threaten the region.

**APPROACH**

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) aims to address and decrease future flooding threats by identifying and preventing development on hydric soils. MMSD partnered with The Conservation Fund to launch and manage Greenseams, a program that combines traditional flood management techniques—such as creating levees and dams—with purchasing, conserving and restoring tracts of privately owned, undeveloped land in areas with major growth plans. Special priority goes to lands adjacent to existing parks.

By acquiring both land and conservation easements throughout the four-county, four-watershed region and assisting landowners with property appraisal and acquisition, this voluntary program strategically protects lands that link key open spaces and prevent flooding. Acquired lands remain open space, retaining rainwater and slowing its flow into rivers and streams.



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## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Analyzed three of four Milwaukee watersheds expected to undergo significant development by 2020
- Identified 7,000 acres of privately owned land suitable for purchase
- Purchased and protected over 800 acres since 2003

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- Milwaukee River, Menomonee River, Oak Creek and Root River watersheds
- Undeveloped hydric soil lands
- Riverside areas that protect flood plains and provide riparian buffer areas from development
- Agricultural fields, where native vegetation is being restored to reduce storm water runoff

## PARTNERS

- The Conservation Fund
- Local governments including City of Franklin, Village of Germantown, City of Mequon, Milwaukee County and City of Oak Creek
- Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy
- Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
- Ozaukee Washington Land Trust
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners Program for Habitat Restoration
- Waukesha land Conservancy
- Wisconsin Coastal Program
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' grant programs

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## GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*Portland, Oregon/Vancouver, Washington Metropolitan Region*

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**CONTACTS:**

**Gil Kelley**  
City of Portland  
Phone: 503.823.7700  
gkelley@ci.portland.or.us

**Heather Nelson-Kent**  
Metro Regional Parks and  
Greenspaces  
Phone: 503.797.1739  
kenth@metro.dst.or.us

**Jennifer Thompson**  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Phone: 503.231.6179  
Jennifer\_Thompson@fws.gov

**CHALLENGES**

Population growth averaging 70 people per day has resulted in the consumption and fragmentation of open land in the Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan Region; in 1997 and 2000, open space was developed at a rate of 1,100 acres per year. By 1997, 16,000 acres of Portland's remaining natural areas identified in 1989 had been lost or substantially changed, and over 400 miles of natural streams have been culverted or lost. In addition, Portland's watersheds face decreased permeable surfaces, erosion and runoff, threatening water quality for the metropolitan region's 2.3 million residents.

**APPROACH**

The region's Metropolitan Greenspaces Program brings together more than 60 government agencies, nonprofit organizations and businesses to establish an interconnected system of natural areas, open spaces, trails and greenways. By focusing on habitat conservation and restoration, environmental education, public outreach and the provision of recreational opportunities, Metro Greenspaces has become one of the most successful urban ecosystem protection programs in the world.

A leader in watershed management, land use planning and parks and recreation, the City of Portland's sustainable stormwater management program is integrating diverse watershed management activities to address its water quality problems.



© METROPOLITAN GREENSPACES PROGRAM

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Through Metro Greenspaces:

- Inventoried and mapped the remaining natural areas in three counties in 1989
- Adopted Greenspaces Master Plan in 1992
  - Identified 57 urban natural areas and 34 trail and greenway corridors
  - Covered 25 cities and four counties within the bi-state metro region
- Passed \$135.6 million bond measure in 1995 to purchase undeveloped natural areas, trails and greenways to be held for future use as parks, trails and fish and wildlife habitat
- Leveraged nearly \$2.2 million in federal funds since 1991 with more than \$9 million locally to support 300+ conservation, education and habitat restoration projects
- Sponsored environmental education programs encouraging local stewardship
- Stimulated community involvement in conservation, education and habitat restoration projects and in the “GreenScene” series of guided hikes

Through Portland’s Sustainable Stormwater Program:

- Acquired vacant land and remnant parcels with native vegetation to help preserve permeability, retain storm water and protect habitat
- Planted trees and added stormwater planters to streets and sidewalks
- Retrofitted streets with curb extensions and planted mini-wetlands that treat stormwater runoff
- Created ecoroofs to restore lost permeable surfaces, slow and treat rainwater and establish a micro-ecosystem
- Promoted public stewardship to prevent watershed pollution

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- Streams, rivers, springs, wetlands, meadows, woodlands and forests
- 200+ species of birds, including migratory birds that use Pacific flyway routes
- Diverse fish species, including migrating salmon
- Other native animal species
- Regional (Forest Park and Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge) and neighborhood parks

## PARTNERS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • The Audubon Society of Portland  | • The Conservation Fund   |
| • City of Portland   | • The National Wildlife Federation  |
| • City of Vancouver  | • The Nature Conservancy  |
| • Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties, Oregon                             | • The Oregon Environmental Council  |
| • Clark County, Washington   | • Schools, their districts and other educational institutions within the area |
| • The Conservation Fund  | • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  |
| • Friends groups, watershed organizations and other non-governmental organizations |   |
| • Metro  |   |



## THE CONSERVATION FUND

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## GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*New River Valley, Virginia*

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**CONTACTS:**

**Kristin Peppel**  
The Conservation Fund  
Phone: 828.232.6834  
Kpeppel@conservationfund.org

**Abigail Convery**  
New River Planning District  
Commission  
Phone: 540.639.9313, x205  
aconvery@nrvpdc.org

**Paul Revell**  
Virginia Department of  
Forestry  
Phone: 434.977.6555  
paul.revell@dof.virginia.gov

**CHALLENGES**

As development pressures increase, the New River Valley region in southwestern Virginia struggles to maintain its rural character. Forestland fragmentation is degrading wildlife habitat and water quality, increasing stormwater management issues and impacting scenic viewsheds, especially along the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

**APPROACH**

The New River Valley Planning District Commission and its partners will identify stakeholder missions, goals and policies and develop a targeted education campaign, using a collaborative learning approach to lay the groundwork for green infrastructure planning among stakeholder groups, local planning boards and elected officials. The Commission and its partners will also develop an inventory map and an implementation strategy to link key lands for wildlife and people.



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## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Conservation Fund, New River Valley Planning District Commission and the Virginia Department of Forestry have joined in a four-year effort to engage stakeholders and guide the formation of a regional green infrastructure leadership plan that will help protect key forestlands and better coordinate local land-use decisions. This effort will result in:

- A regional green infrastructure strategy, including the setting of conservation priorities
- The introduction of green infrastructure planning and practices into local governments' decision-making processes
- Multi-agency goal and policy coordination
- A stakeholder- and locality-created handbook of policy guidelines
- Workshops that promote green infrastructure planning
- Integration of new mapping tools

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- Agricultural lands
- Forestland resources
- Appalachian Trail Scenic Resources
- Blue Ridge Parkway Scenic Resources
- Catawba Valley
- Little River
- Paris Mountain

## PARTNERS

- The Conservation Fund
- Montgomery County
- National Park Service
- New River Land Trust
- New River Valley Planning District Commission
- Virginia Cooperative Extension Service
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Environmental Endowment
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Western Virginia Land Trust

## THE CONSERVATION FUND

*America's Partner in Conservation*

## GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*Tucson/Pima County, Arizona Metropolitan Region*

"The Conservation Fund applauds the work of its partners across America for their efforts to advance smart conservation, creating livable communities and networks of natural areas, working landscapes and open space. This balanced and strategic approach to conservation serves as a model for the nation"

- Mark Benedict, author,  
*Green Infrastructure:  
Linking Landscapes and  
Communities*

**CONTACTS:****Maeveen Behan****Pima County****Phone: 520.740.8800****Maeveen.Behan@pima.gov****www.pima.gov/sdcp/****Carolyn Campbell****Coalition for Sonoran Desert  
Protection****Phone: 520.388.9925****Carolyn@sonorandesert.org****www.sonorandesert.org****CHALLENGES**

The Tucson area has been one of the fastest-growing metropolitan regions of the country since World War II. In 2000-2001, an average of almost 1,500 new residents moved to Pima County each month. New construction consumes an estimated ten square miles of desert each year, resulting in the loss of native ecosystems and wildlife as well as lands of scenic, historic and cultural value.

**APPROACH**

Building on strategic land conservation planning begun in the 1990s, Pima County developed the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP), a "long-term vision for protecting the heritage and natural resources of the West" within the county. SDCP's science-based process identified at-risk plant and animal communities, delineated priority conservation areas and defined biological corridors and critical habitat. Pima County appointed a public steering committee of regional stakeholders and a scientific technical advisory team to assist in developing SDCP.

By defining ecological, scenic, historic and cultural resource values and providing a framework for conserving those values in Pima County, SDCP aims to protect a host of vulnerable species through large-scale natural system conservation and restoration efforts. Because Pima County understands that the area's economic viability depends in part on protecting the natural resources—threatened land, water and plant and animal species—and cultural identity that make it an attractive place to live and to visit, its leaders and residents have focused their efforts on developing a strategic and deliberate approach to land conservation in this area, linking vital tracts of land for people and wildlife.



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## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Prepared SDCP
- Created the Conservation Lands System
  - Adopted in the local land use plan in 2001
  - Contains associated land development guidelines
- Purchased important habitat areas
- Assisted in the designation of a new national reserve: the Ironwood Forest National Monument

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- Natural resources within 5.9 million acres of Pima County, including two major eco-regions, the Sky Islands and the Sonoran Desert
- The cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, added to the endangered species list in 1997, as well as 54 other priority vulnerable species
- Biological corridors, critical habitats and biological core areas
- Riparian features
  - Streams and springs
  - Groundwater recharge
  - Riparian restoration
- Mountain parks and nature preserves
  - Existing and proposed parks and preserves
  - Proposed park expansions
- Working ranch lands
- Cultural resources (archaeological and historic sites)

## PARTNERS

- Arizona Game & Fish
- The Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection (over 40 local, regional and national conservation groups including Defenders of Wildlife, Sierra Club and Tucson Audubon Society)
- The Conservation Fund
- Pima County
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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#### CONTACTS:

**J. Glenn Eugster**  
National Park Service  
Phone: 202.619.7492  
Glenn\_Eugster@nps.gov

**Brian M. LeCouteur**  
Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments  
Phone: 202.962.3393  
blecouteur@mwkog.org

## THE CONSERVATION FUND

*America's Partner in Conservation*

# GREAT GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

*Washington, DC Metropolitan Region*

## CHALLENGES

One of the nation's fastest-growing areas, the Washington, DC Metropolitan region loses nearly 30 acres a day to development. Loudon County alone nearly doubled its population in ten years. This rapid, consistent population growth threatens the region's open spaces, agricultural areas, parks and both air and water quality.

## APPROACH

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the National Park Service partnered to launch the Washington Green Infrastructure Demonstration project (WGID), which seeks to map and strategically conserve land, linking open spaces for wildlife and people. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Educate communities about thoughtful green infrastructure development practices through dialogue, forums, workshops and virtual tours
- Protect and enhance existing parks, recreation areas and open spaces
- Improve air quality through the advocacy of green roof technology, reducing impervious surfaces and enhancing neighborhood tree canopies
- Filter stormwater discharge to improve overall water quality



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## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WGID heightened awareness of the importance of parks, open space and recreation areas as fundamental quality-of-life components by:

- Documenting and illustrating a 15-year loss of green space through Geographic Information Systems mapping projects for the 3000-square-mile region:
  - Map of remaining land cover, including park, recreation and open space lands
  - Maps of impervious surface areas and agricultural lands
  - Interactive time series map showing the increase in developed lands from 1986-2000
- Holding forums and workshops on urban green and gray infrastructure issues such as storm water management, green roofs, window boxes, street trees, parks, gardens and healthy forests
- Launching a public web page: <http://www.mwcog.org/environment/green/>

## NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

- Potomac River
- Chesapeake Bay
- Community and regional parks and associated protected greenspaces
- Neighborhood tree canopies
- Wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, forests and meadows in headwater areas

## PARTNERS

- American Forests
- Casey Trees Endowment
- The Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Chesapeake Bay Program
- Chesapeake Chapter of the American Horticultural Therapy Association
- The Conservation Fund
- DC Department of Parks and Recreation
- DC Urban Forestry Administration
- The Environmental Law Institute
- Friends of the Potomac
- Greater Washington National Parks Fund
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland National Park and Planning Commission
- Maryland and Virginia local offices of Forestry, Planning, Parks and Public Works
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- National Capital Planning Commission
- National Park Service
- The Native Plant Society (local chapters)
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Geological Survey
- USDA Urban and Community Forestry
- Virginia Department of Agriculture
- Washington Parks and People
- The Wilderness Society